

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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R 181410Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4162

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

DIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

USMISSION USNATO

USMISSION USUN

USNMR SHAPE BEL

SECDEF WASHDC

S E C R E T NICOSIA 2390

USCINCEUR FOR POLAD

USDOCOSOUTH FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MOPS CY TU

SUBJECT: COG CONCERNS ABOUT TURKISH MILITARY ALERT

1. FONMIN DIRGEN PELAGHIAS CALLED CHARGE IN AUGUST 18 TO REPORT GOC CONCERN ABOUT TURKISH MILITARY ALERT ON CYPRUS. GOC IS CALLING ATTENTION OF ALL PERMANENT MEMBERS OF SECURITY COUNCIL TO A "DANGEROUS SITUATION WHICH MIGHT FURTHER PREJUDICE HOPE" FOR SUCCESSFUL RESOLUTION OF CYPRUS PROBLEM.

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2. GOC HAS INFORMATION THAT TURKISH MILITARY ON CYPRUS HAS BEEN

PLACED ON ALERT STATUS. LEAVES HAVE BEEN CANCELLED. MILITARY PERSONNEL ARE REQUIRED TO SLEEP AT DUTY STATIONS, AND ARE NOT EVEN ALLOWED TO RETURN TO THEIR QUARTERS. RESERVE TURKISH CYPRIOT FIGHTERS AGES 18 TO 40 HAVE BEEN RECALLED TO ACTIVE DUTY, ADDING TO GOC ANXIETY. GOC IS PARTICULARLY DISTURBED BY A "CONCENTRATION OF FORCES" IN THE AREA NORTH OF LARNACA. IN THE EVENT OF A CONFRONTATION IN THE AEGEAN GOC FEARS TURKS MIGHT MOVE MILITARILY AGAINST LARNACA AIRPORT AND/OR OIL REFINERY ON THE PRETEXT THAT THESE FACILITIES COULD BE USED BY GREEK MILITARY AIRCRAFT TO BOMB THE SOUTHERN PART OF TURKEY.

3. PELAGHIAS NOTED THAT US HAD GIVEN STRONG SUPPORT TO THAT PORTION OF THE JUNE 1976 UNSC RESOLUTION WHICH "URGES THE PARTIES CONCERNED TO REFRAIN FROM ANY UNILATERAL OR OTHER ACTION LIKELY TO AFFECT ADVERSELY THE PROSPECTS OF NEGOTIATIONS." ANY MILITARY MOVE ON CYPRUS WOULD CERTAINLY HURT PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS. IN LIGHT OF THIS, US AND OTHER SC MEMBERS MIGHT WISH TO WARN TURKEY THAT THEY WOULD NOT ACCEPT UNILATERAL MILITARY ACTION.

4. CHARGE ASKED WHETHER GOC WAS REQUESTING US TO MAKE A DEMARCHE NOW. PELAGHIAS CLARIFIED THAT GOC IS NOT DOING SO BUT IS MERELY CALLING TO USG'S ATTENTION A DANGEROUS SITUATION. GOC WOULD NATURALLY BE PLEASED, HOWEVER, IF US FOUND IT POSSIBLE TO EXPRESS CONCERN TO GOT.

5. DATT MAKES FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON SITUATION:

A. TURKISH/TURK CYPRIOT FORCES ARE AND HAVE BEEN IN A HIGH STATE OF ALERT FOR ABOUT ONE MONTH. SINCE MAY 1976 MAINLAND TURKISH STRENGTH PROBABLY HAS INCREASED BY 1,500. NO RPT NO ADDITIONAL UNITS ARE BELIEVED ADDED TO THE FORCE. MAINLAND TURKISH ARMY STRENGTH HERE ESTIMATED AT 28,000. TURK CYPRIOT FIGHTER STRENGTH REMAINS FAIRLY CONSTANT AND CURRENT ESTIMATE IS UP TO 6,000. TOTAL TURK/TURK CYPRIOT STRENGTH ABOUT 34,000. ARMORED FORCE ALSO REMAINS CONSTANT AT 150 TANKS OR THREE BATTALIONS.

B. GREEK/GREEK CYPRIOT STRENGTH ALSO HOLDING STEADY.

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CURRENT ESTIMATE IS AROUND 12,000. GREEKS/GREEK CYPRIOTS ALONG CONFRONTATION LINE ARE SCRUPULOUSLY AVOIDING ANY PROVOCATIVE ACTS OR MOVEMENTS DURING THIS TENSE PERIOD.

C. PRINCIPAL TURKISH UNIT WHICH COULD THREATEN LARNACA IS 61ST INF REGT OF THE 28TH INF DIV. DATT NOT RPT NOT AWARE THAT THIS UNIT HAS BEEN AUGMENTED OR REINFORCED. TURKS HAVE CAPABILITY IN THIS AREA TO REINFORCE USING 230TH INF REGT

ALSO OF THE 28TH INF DIV WHICH MANS SECTOR OF CONFRONTATION LINE BORDERING BRITISH EASTERN SOVERIGN BASE AREA AND IS RELATIVELY UNCOMMITTED. AGAIN DATT NOT RPT NOT AWARE SUCH REINFORCEMENT MADE. TURKISH ARMY CORPS RESERVES IN KYTHREA AREA CONSISTING OF TANK BATTALION AND MECHANIZED INFANTRY BATTALION WERE OBSERVED BY DATT ON SUNDAY 15 AUGUST 1976 IN THEIR NORMAL LOCATIONS.

D. TURKISH THREAT TO LARNACA IS A RECURRING THEME WHENEVER A TENSE SITUATION DEVELOPS. USE OF LARNACA AIRFIELD BY GREEKS IN CASE OF AEGEAN WAR IS LATEST VARIATION ON THIS THEME. THE DISTANCE FROM THE TURKISH LINES TO THE CENTER OF MASS LARNACA AIRFIELD IS 18 KILOMETERS AND TO LARNACA TOWN SOME 4 KILOMETERS ESS OR 14 KILOMETERS. TURKS, USING 155MM HOWITZERS KNOWN TO BE IN CYPRUS FIRING AT NEAR MAXIMUM RANGE OF 14.6 KILOMETERS, COULD INTERDICT LARNACA TOWN BY ARTILLERY FIRE FROM THEIR PRESENT POSITIONS. OIL REFINERY STILL CLOSER TO TURKISH LINES WITHIN EASY ARTILLERY RANGE. TURKS BY SLIGHT MOVE FORWARD INTO CONFRONTATION AREA COULD BRING LARNACA AIRFIELD INTO ARTILLERY RANGE. POINT IS THAT TURKS DO NOT RPT NOT HAVE TO SEIZE AND HOLD LARNACA TO DENY IT TO THE GREEKS, BECAUSE IT CAN BE DONE BY ARTILLERY INTERDICTION.

E. GOC MAY HAVE VALID CAUSE FOR CONCERN THAT TURKS WOULD OPEN HOSTILITIES IN CYPRUS IN RESPONSE TO AEGEAN GRECO-TURKISH CONFLICT. FROM A MILITARY VIEWPOINT, HOWEVER, IT APPEARS THAT TURKS WOULD HAVE TO CONCENTRATE FORCES/EFFORTS IN AEGEAN AND THRACE AND NOT RPT NOT DISPOSE FORCES TO OPEN UP A THIRD FRONT IN CYPRUS. THEREFORE, BELIEVE TURKISH MILITARY ACTION IN CYPRUS, WHILE NOT IMPOSSIBLE IS IMPROBABLE.

6. PELAGHIAS SAID THAT HE WOULD APPRECIATE RESPONSE TO HIS
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EXPRESSION OF CONCERN. WE WOULD APPRECIATE GUIDANCE FOR SUCH
A RESPONSE.

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